
LIVERPOOL ANARCHIST



Mid-June saw a rise in violent homophobic attacks in Liverpool, with three being reported in the Echo, and these are just the attacks taken to the press.

In response, a protest was organised in the City Centre for the 22nd of June, at incredibly short notice. There was a great turnout and a lovely atmosphere, making it abundantly clear that homophobia is not welcome in this city. The protest wasn't co-opted by corporations or derailed by transphobes. When the first police turned up - two liaison officers (information gatherers) - and tried to take a photo with a drag queen, the crowd spontaneously erupted into booing.

Some people might welcome an increased police presence after the attacks, but the police have a consistent historical and international record of enforcing homophobic and transphobic laws. The event that Pride parades commemorate, the Stone-wall riots, started as a response to systematic police harassment. If the law changed, with the LGBT+ community finding itself shunned by the ruling classes again, police would happily go above-and-beyond in their persecution.

Additionally the police continue to treat other groups in the same way they used to treat the

LGBT+ community: subjected to violence, denied a right to assemble and prevented from living their way of life. People of colour, workers on strike and travellers are all targeted for being on the wrong side of the capitalist order. On this basis, rejection of the police is a basic act of solidarity.

The queer community doesn't need the police; even if we wanted their help they can't be everywhere at once and can't be relied on to stop instances of violence. But we do need to have eachothers backs. We need to promote a culture of self-defence and solidarity. Could you organise free self-defence classes for queer people? Would you turn a blind eye if you saw someone defending themselves from an attack using a weapon? Or taking matters into their own hands and targeting the perpetrator of a queer bashing? Would you intervene if you saw someone being attacked for their sexuality or gender? •

We always felt that the police were the real enemy. We expected nothing better than to be treated like we were animals - and we were.

Sylvia Rivera

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

In April we wrote about electricians (sparks) on the Wirral holding weekly protests against plans by Balfour Beatty and EDF to undercut wages by de-skilling. It looks like their campaign has been completely successful! This was primarily due to direct action taken down south, such as trespassing to disrupt or shutdown offices and worksites. On one occasion sparks gathered from across the country, including Merseyside, and shut down a nuclear weapons facility in Berkshire using flying pickets, despite resistance from the police.

In Gateshead, Tyneside, unskilled workers were being hired for electrical work at an Amazon warehouse. Without hesitation the local rank-and-file group setup a picket line on Wednesday the 16th of June and 60 sparks refused to cross. There were around 100 workers present, most from outside that workplace, some even from offshore platforms. The next day the contractor agreed to hire proper electricians. However, on the Friday around 35 sparks were sacked, and told that “threatening behaviour, sabotage or any trouble whatsoever” would result in losing that week’s pay. There are basically no legal protections for wildcat (unofficial) strikes and no reason was given for the dismissals. So electricians picketed the site again on Monday, and on Tuesday they actually blocked the entrance. The police took this opportunity to tell them to move, but they simply walked continuously back and forth! One scab almost ran over the workers and threatened to stab them all at a later date. Despite this, and an increased police presence, they returned on Wednesday the 23rd and succeeded in getting all of the workers reinstated!

Some of the Sparks are members of Unite, but the union’s bureaucracy has done little to practically support them, even denouncing some of their actions in the first campaign. Regardless of whether they stick with Unite, form or join another union (ideally without a bureaucracy to repeat the same issues), or decide to do something entirely different, one thing is clear: direct action gets the goods. •

“We are free, truly free, when we don’t need to rent our arms to anybody in order to be able to lift a piece of bread to our mouths.”

Ricardo Flores Magón

UNIVERSITY DISPUTE UPDATE

Last month we interviewed a worker about a strike that broke out at the University of Liverpool to stop redundancies. In our questions we (incorrectly) stated that students who had been occupying scab-lectures in 2020 had stopped at the request of UCU. It turns out that we were misinformed, and in fact they had stopped for other reasons such as burnout and the end of the strike. We have now been informed by those involved that the union made no attempts to discourage them. We can only apologise for any confusion the error caused.

The strike ended on the 11th of June, as planned. The union then began a marking ban, while continuing a work-to-rule. On the 24th, students organised a protest to show their support for the workers. However, the University has now made it clear that anyone participating in the marking ban to any degree will lose full pay. Which begs the obvious question: why work at all? As of the 29th, strike action has not been announced but tensions are rising and further conflict seems inevitable. If strike action is pursued, is it worth following the slow and stifling official process? Could additional tactics be used to escalate the dispute? •



STERILISATION: A FEMINIST FIGHT

The first time I tried to get sterilised, I was 21. After numerous contraceptives took their toll on my mental and physical health, and knowing I don't want children, it was the only option left for me.

This is the case for thousands of people with wombs across the country, with tubal ligation procedures happening every day. However, the journey to accessing these minor operations is an uphill battle for many, with most under the age of 30 finding themselves refused by doctors.

I was one of them.

“We hate authority because we aspire to be human beings and not machines directed by the will of ‘another,’ be this authority, religion, or any other name.”

La Voz de la Mujer

My path to sterilisation is littered with medical professionals, most of who were men, giving me a range of excuses for why they will not operate on me. Firstly, I was too young. Not too young to work and pay bills and mother a child, but too young to decide I didn't want to. Secondly, I might regret it. They felt such empathy for me they decided I didn't deserve bodily autonomy.

Thirdly and most shockingly, I was told I might meet a man one day who wants children. I was 26 when I was given that excuse by a gynaecologist, and after a five year battle I understood that what was holding me back wasn't me, but sexism from professionals who were meant to be helping me.

Doctors were putting the wants of a man who doesn't exist before the wants of a woman who does. The medical misogyny I felt in that moment set a fire under me and I was more determined than ever to go for the procedure.

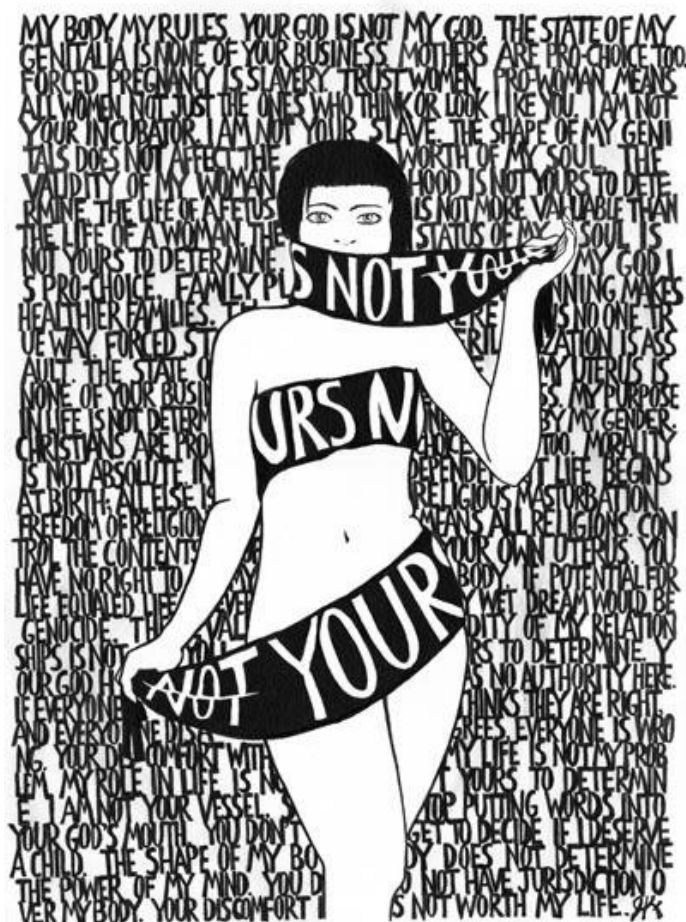
I finally got consent for the procedure this year, now I'm 30, but I know that I'm not alone in my experiences. Some people have experienced being asked if they're 'sure they want to go through with

it' whilst in the hospital on the day of the surgery, and others have had their mental health questioned for wanting it.

Unfortunately, medical misogyny is just another part of a patriarchal capitalist structure we have to endure. There are no laws prohibiting people from getting sterilised, but the choice is up to the individual doctor, which removes our autonomy and forces us to continue with damaging contraceptive alternatives. It is getting easier, but not quickly enough.

If you're considering sterilisation, I recommend writing a letter outlining clearly your reasons with enough evidence as you can gather to back it up. Having something written down means a doctor can't misinterpret your words when relaying it back later, and it means you won't forget anything when you're talking. Also, make sure you ask they make a record of the outcome of every conversation, so you have a copy in case you think they are behaving negligently.

There are plenty of reasons someone with a womb might want to get sterilised, and each of them should be considered as valid as another. I'm happy I've finally won my battle, but I shouldn't have even had to fight. •



A TRANS MAN FROM GEORGIAN BRITAIN

In August 1836, the New York police arrested a man who had been born female. Initially it looks like he lied to the police about his name, "James/Jane Walker", and background. Claiming that he was looking for an estranged husband, and started working and dressing as a man to survive and gain access to the docks, he presumably hoped he might be let off with a warning. However, when his wife, Elizabeth, asked to see him at the jail the next day, his name was revealed: George Moore Wilson.

George was born around 1806 at 20 Atherton Street, Liverpool. When he was 9 he moved to Ayrshire, Scotland. Aged 12 he adopted his father-in-law's name, put on masculine clothes and ran away to Glasgow, finding work in a textile mill. A marriage certificate showed that on the 2nd of April 1821 he married Elizabeth Cummings at the Barony Church in Glasgow. Just a couple days later they set sail for Quebec; only then did she find out he was transgender. They lived in New Limerick for a while, where Elizabeth's father moved into their house, and then they moved to Paterson, where both of the men worked at the same mill. Finally George moved to Brooklyn, New York, and found work at the docks. All throughout this he was clearly read as male by his contemporaries, even his father-in-law didn't know his birth sex. It was only when he was arrested that the fact he was trans was revealed. While we know that the magistrate lectured him on his "crossdressing" and

mocked that his marriage had bore no children, we don't know the end result of the trial.

It is worth noting the term 'transgender' did not exist back then. It's possible that Wilson might have transitioned for economic reasons or simply to marry a woman, although the most likely explanation is the simplest: he lived as a man because he wanted to.

Evidence of a trans man from Liverpool this far back might seem extraordinary, but while his wife was alarmed by the court case, when summoned she spoke about the matter with "nonchalance", showing that for some people it's always been the norm. Regardless of his reasoning, despite all the barriers, George Moore Wilson dared to be himself. But he had to live a life of secrecy and exile, and was most likely forced into living as a woman after the court case. Despite the barriers that we might face today or in the future, we need to fight so that anyone from or in this city can proudly take control of their bodies and their lives. •

ARMS FAIR COMING TO LIVERPOOL

Arms Fair Europe, organised by AOC Europe, is set to take place from the 11th to the 13th of October at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool, which is owned by the Council. Who asked the people of Liverpool if we wanted this? A protest was held on the 27th of June, but more effective action will be needed to shut down these merchants of death. •



The *Liverpool Anarchist* is written by individual members of the Solidarity Federation, an anarcho-syndicalist union. We aim to publish monthly and welcome all contributions in accord with our basic ideas. We advocate working class direct action to improve our lives here and now while building a revolutionary movement to do away with capitalism, the state, and all other hierarchies.

Send in feedback, comments, and submissions to:
liverpoolanarchist@tuta.io

You can find us online at:
liverpoolanarchist.wordpress.com
Solidarity Federation: liverpoolsf.org
